

CNO: IAs critical to War on Terror

Story provided by Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

In a visit Jan. 19 to observe individual augmentee (IA) training at Camp McCrady, S.C., Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Mullen made it clear that IA deployments will continue, and that they are critical to the Navy's efforts in the war on terror.

"I see this as a long-term commitment by the Navy," he said. "I'm anxious to pitch in as much as we possibly can, for the duration of this war. Not only can we do our share, but [we can] take as much stress off those who are deploying back-to-back, home one year, deployed one year and now are on their third or fourth deployment."



The Navy currently has more than 10,000 Sailors in IA duty assignments all over the world. Personnel officials estimate that nearly half the 4,300 Sailors serving in Iraq are IA's. Mullen said he

does not expect those figures to change dramatically in the next year or so.

"Obviously, we can't predict the future with any certainty, but I don't see the need for Navy talent in the IA world going down any time soon," he said.

The CNO has pushed to expand the Navy's contribution on the ground in the Central Command Area Responsibility, stressing that the war on ter-

ror is a national fight, not just one for the Army and Marine Corps. Sailors, he said, bring unique perspectives and skills to the effort. But he was also quick to point out that IA duty can have a similar effect on Sailors themselves, broadening their viewpoints and exposing them to new methods of warfighting.

"We have had thousands of Sailors go through this [IA Duty], and I think its going to cause the Navy to change how we look at the world", said Mullen. "I fundamentally believe that you can't stay 1,000 miles out at sea and watch the rest of the world go by."

The recently-established Task Force Individual Augmentation, for example, has increased notification time for

Sailors ordered to IA billets from under 30 days to a high of 80 days in December 2006. The notification window begins when a Sailor receives written orders of IA duty, and ends when that Sailor leaves the area of permanent duty station. The CNO thanked the Sailors for their service as IA's and also expressed his gratitude for the sacrifices being made by their families. He said support for those families remains a top priority.

"In direct guidance from me, I have asked commands to have a support mechanism to ensure that families are supported," he said. "We want to make sure that we are doing as much as we can to support you."

CNO says diversity is a 'strategic imperative'

Diversity is a strategic imperative for the United States Navy.

We defend the greatest nation in the world. It is a nation that welcomes, indeed encourages, the active participation of every citizen regardless of race, gender, creed or color – a democracy founded on the premise of opportunity for all. It is also a nation whose demographic makeup continually changes, reflecting the influx

of new immigrants and the growth of minority populations. The Navy must change with it. To the degree we truly represent our democracy, we are a stronger, more relevant armed force.

Diversity is critical to mission accomplishment.

Everyone in our Navy contributes to mission success, and everyone brings to that collective effort unique capabilities and individual talent. How we

harness those capabilities and foster that talent bears considerable effect on our ability to successfully accomplish the mission. Like any organization in the time change, we thrive on the infusion of new ideas and the diversity of thought. This is particularly true today, when understanding the mores, customs and ideals of diverse cultures, as well as the perspectives of other people, remains critical to winning the long war.

Diversity is a leadership issue, and everyone is a leader.

We will promote and engender a culture that embraces our

diversity. Through our communications, education, policies, programs and conduct, each of us will actively foster work environments where people are valued, respected, and provided the opportunity to reach their full personal and professional potential. We will recruit, develop, educate and retain leaders from and for all parts of our Navy and nation.

We defend the greatest nation in the world. The strength of our diversity directly and irrefutably helps us do so. The Navy will stay committed to improving that strength.

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'All Hands' call

RADM Edward Masso, Assistant Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education) will address all hands and take questions on Feb. 5, 4:15 p.m., at the Windjammer Ballroom. All those attending need to be in place no later than 4 p.m.